

Grove House  
Halifax  
Halifax County  
North Carolina  
(DATA PAGES ONLY)

HABS No. NC-177

HABS  
NC  
42-HAL  
5-

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of North Carolina

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

HABS No. NC-177

GROVE HOUSE  
Halifax, Halifax County, North Carolina

HABS  
N.C.  
42 HAL.  
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Date of erection: c. 1765

Date demolished: c. 1915

Architect: Sketches perhaps by Jefferson

Builder: Willie Jones

Description:

Frame; two stories; pediment roof. (See index card  
for photo.)

## HISTORIC HOMES IN NORTH CAROLINA.

Willie Jones' father, Col. Robert Jones, lived at what was called "Jones' Castle" in Northampton county, just across the river from Halifax but died while his son was at Eton, England.

After young Willie's return to America in the year 1765, he moved his father's house to Halifax and built in the extreme south of the town what has since been known as the "Grove House."

All the building material of the first house which was erected in 1740 had been brought from England. This when moved to Halifax was added to and improved to suit the taste of the young owner and his prospective bride. The construction of this house which has stood so well the storms of years was elaborate; the workmanship was of the best and it was built according to the demands of the times in regard to hospitable entertainment, situated in an immense park of native white oaks, it still stands a ruin of what was once the castle from which its owner extended such lavish hospitality and around whose hearthstones he used those graces which won men to his views and brought such lasting results.

Of the majestic oaks which formed this park, or "Groves" which Mr. Jones preferred to call it, and through whose branches the sunlight fell on dead leaves and bronze mosses which formed a carpet of varied colors for the feet, there are five remaining in one group; these five oaks divide honors with two immense sycamores in guarding the approach to the front door of

the castle. One of the provisions of Mr. Jones' will was that not an axe should be laid to the body of one of these trees, but alas, how impotent the will of man to control the events of passing years-many of them have been removed. The door-yard is a wilderness of shrubbery, which has reached an abnormal growth, and the limbs of huge Crepe Myrtles are interlaced with those of the "Rose of Sharon" and Mock Orange which are more trees than shrubs, so long and deep have their roots fastened themselves in the generous soil.

The steps to the front porch were of semi-circular shape and built of red granite, which was brought from Scotland. The entrance hall is large and square, the wainscoting of handsome paneled oak, the moulding around the ceiling of each room is precisely what many are using to-day, with the addition of the dignity given by more than a hundred years, the large open fireplaces in hall, salon, and parlor offer suggestions of the warmth and cheer of which only these shadows remain. In one corner of this hall is a peculiarly arranged window or nook, said to have contained secret chambers which opened with a concealed spring and which is credited with having been the receptacle of state papers of no little importance. Uncanny tales are told of other spirits than those which cheer as visiting this mysterious corner at most unlooked for times, and "hants" are often seen by the credulous passerby, when overtaken by the darkness in this forsaken spot.

A wide cross hall separates this one from the banquet

hall or dining room which deserves more than a passing notice. All the rooms are large, this one unusually so. The wide and deep bow window, the high carved mantel which reached to the ceiling, the heavy frescoe and many other small paned windows give it still an air of more than ordinary interest. The tone and coloring of the paper on the walls can be seen in places but much of its ornamentation has been taken away by relic seekers.

This large bow window which formed a semi-circle with one wide center window and two smaller windows on either side, was the first one ever built in North Carolina, and Mr. Jones arranged it so that he could have a perfect view of his private race track, and from this room watch the racing of his blooded horses of which he was passionately fond. Of the cost of this window we can form some idea, when we remember that the duty on glass was one of the chief grounds of complaint at the time this house was built.